

Student paper

BLAME IT ON THE BENTS:
The New England Shoe Industry
and
Its Role in Cochituate
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and
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Submitted to
Mr. Scotland
United States History
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To
Margaret Bent Morrell
and
Alvin Neal
without whose help
this paper would have
proved an impossible task.

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Note: the names of streets are those which are currently used, not necessarily those of the time period.

Oh, Dem Golden Slippers!



It was 1875. Renewed in the minds of the citizens of Middlesex County was the excitement of sturdy, homespun-clothed farmer recruits of Lexington, Concord, and the surrounding towns, valiantly combatting, one hundred years before, the British soldiers dressed in brave red.

Anxious preparations were being made for a great Centennial Celebration to be held in Concord in the spring.

Mothers put aside their scrub boards and cancelled their Wednesday morning poetry circles to sew pint-size Minuteman costumes for their sons who were marching in the parade or to fry up batches of crullers to sell during the festivities. Store-keepers draped huge American flags from the eaves of their shops, and small children dreamed nightly of stars and stripes, fife and drum, and the thickly frosted cake Mrs. Johnson was going to raffle off to raise money for seat cushions for the newly built Methodist Church.

And, every evening after closing time at the Bent Shoe Factory in Cochituate, 45 of the 500 hands would gather behind the factory to perfect the pieces they had been practicing for weeks—"The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Swanee," and "Jeannie With the Light Brown Hair." Rehearsal became especially tense when it was discovered that President Grant would be attending the parade.

Bands were extremely popular at this time. Every town and important organization in the town would sponsor a brass band, richly outfitted with shiny tin buttons and smart gold epaulets, and would enter their bands in statewide competition.

It naturally followed that the Bent factory would have a band. Partially because of their instructor Ed Hartson, a one time band leader, and partially because Mr. Bent often hired men of musical ability, giving them only the easiest of tasks, the band gleaned several blue ribbons in local contests.

This was the hey-day of the Cochituate shoe industry- the proud days of Tom ward, leading his band with an illuminated shoe carried high on a pole. The story to follow is of the rise and subsequent decline of the shoe industry in Cochituate and how it changed a tiny village centered at Lokerville, barely perceptible on the first official map of Wayland in 1783, to an actively industrial town which at one time housed the largest shoe factory in Massachusetts.

The History of the New England Shoe Industry

The history of shoemaking in New England is generally divided into four stages: the Home Stage, the Handicraft Stage, the Domestic Stage, and the Factory Stage.

When the first settlers arrived on the shores of New England in 1620, they naturally brought with them the shoes that they had worn in England. But these shoes were short-lived because of the rigorous life the settlers led- house building, forest clearing, and crop planting.

The settlers, because of their self-sufficient nature, were forced to cope with this problem individually. In the summer, they would naturally go barefoot, a custom which is still with us today. During the first winters, moccasins and leggins sufficed and were even, upon occasion, more desirable than their former shoes because of their greater pliability under snow shoes.

But soon, the New England farmers decided that they needed shoes similar to their former English shoes, sturdier and with greater longevity than these first attempts at foot covering. They commenced to make their own shoes at home.

This was known as the Home Stage and existed throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. The first step in successful home shoemaking was the acquiring of leather.

At this time every community had a bark house and several tanning pits. In Wayland, the writers postulate, these were located in such isolated areas as up near J. Sidney Stone's property on Lincoln Road or near Baldwin's Pond, because of the foul smell emitted from them. They were rough pits dug in obscure places. Into these the farmers threw in a layer of cattle skins, then one of hemlock leaves and so on until the pit was filled. Sole leather was obtained from oak bark if it was available.

The vat was opened yearly and the contents removed. Since the owner of the vat was also the currier, his was the task of removing the hair from the skins and dressing the leather by pounding it on a lapstone, then scraping it. The upper leather skins

were kneaded with oil. The skins thus prepared, he sent them to the farmers.¹

During a lag in the farmwork and on long winter evenings, a member of the family chose to learn the shoemaker's craft in order to aid his family. Once the leather was obtained, the quasi-shoemaker would sit by the kitchen fire, his knees protected from the heat, measuring each child for a pair of shoes. Much room was left for the growing foot, though an accurate fit seemed unimportant at the time. In fact, there were no right or left shoes. Most were cut according to length; the only regulation put on the size was an "instep leather" for full or slim sizes. The straight shoes were made of roughly tanned cowhide. The shoemaker would have the members of his family place their feet on the kitchen floor so he could make a charcoal sketch. From this sketch he cut the sole of the shoe with a knife and through his ingenuity would shape and design the shoe as he pleased. If both shoes resembled each other and fit identically, it was merely coincidental.

In time, some of these early craftsmen became so adept at the art of shoemaking that they constructed little sheds off to one side of the house solely for the purpose of making shoes, leaving the earning to the rest of the family. As his community grew, he found he could offer his services to his neighbors, thus providing emergency funds for his family in case of a crop failure. These small shops were usually built as additions to the kitchens.

The shoemaker chose to peddle his shoes to the surrounding homes, from these kitchen ells. This trade was called "whipping the cat," and the only competition the shoemaker found was in the itinerant shoemaker who wandered through his vicinity, often times displaying better leather and craftsmanship. Perhaps the tanners, because they suspected the poorer quality of their leather to be particularly responsible for the growing popularity of the traveling shoemaker, chose to improve their tanning methods so that the townspeople would once again buy shoes from the local shoemakers.

¹ Ioker, William A., Boots and Shoes, pp. 1-2.

The shoemaker now centered his activities in a shop that was a separate entity from the kitchen ell. Although the tanning methods improved, this did not cause the actual making of the shoes in the shop to differ greatly from the times when the farmers made them in front of the kitchen fires- with a lapstone and handmade hammer used for pounding the leather, a single knife to cut both sole and upper leather, an awl to bore holes and a needle or bunch or bristles, "brussels," to sew the shoes. Pincers pulled the fitted upper over the last, which was held in place by a buckle or strap.¹

This was the Handicraft Stage which dominated the middle of the 18th century, with the shoemaker making shoes in his own shop upon the specific demand of a customer. This was known as "bespoke" work. Young boys who wished to enter this trade became apprentices for seven years to the village shoemaker, or "cordwainer," as he came to be called. In the latter days of the period, certain of the shoemakers initiated the custom of making "extra-sale" shoes, those fashioned in spare time for no particular customer, and he displayed these in the window of his shop.



Shoeshop in Middleton, Mass.

Because of the increasing demand for shoes, the cordwainer, rather than making shoes on specific demand or displaying his "extra-sale" shoes in his shop, would turn over completed shoes, made in random sizes in his own shop, to an "entrepreneur" who would sell them to retail or wholesale markets.

¹ Ibid, pp. 1-2, and Watkins, L.W., "Shoemaking and the Small Town", Old-Time New England, pp. 104-105.

This was the Domestic Stage and it lasted from about 1760 to 1855.

The years from 1810 to 1837 saw the introduction and widespread use of the "central shop." Material was cut in this shop, often an outgrowth from the small shoeshop, and distributed or "put out" to some of the families in the surrounding area. There was a job for every member of the family, and shoemaking became once again a subsidiary source of income. The women were given the more intricate task of siding up and cording the boot legs; the men took on boots to last and bottom; even the children had straps to stick on and tops and counters to sew.

About this time, the ten-footers appeared in the New England town to accomplish nearly the same purpose as those families who cooperated under the "central shop" system.

The ten-footers were small shops varying in size from eight feet square to 14 feet square. From four to eight work benches were in each shop, and men worked diligently at these, producing shoes, especially brogans, (heavy, pegged shoes for the Negro slaves), for the large export trade. Through increased specialization, wherein each worker became particularly adept in one facet of shoemaking, they were able to decrease the time required to complete a pair of shoes.

At this time in Massachusetts, there were very few large factories. In 1837, Stoneham led production of shoes, producing over 380,000 pairs annually, and it is interesting to note that at this time Natick was the fourth largest Massachusetts producer, putting out annually over 250,000 pairs.

The growing industry received a check in the financial crisis of 1837. Soon many people realized that it must become a systematic and critical investment, and not be pervaded with the former sentiment that this was merely a side venture.

With the advent of such machinery as the sole cutter (1844), the pattern making machine for uppers (1848), and the at last recognized pegging machine that had been invented in 1818, the shoe industry entered its fourth and final stage, the Factory Stage, beginning about 1855. With this came industrial organization, supervision of work, and uniformity of product, although there were still far more ten-footers than factories in any town.¹

¹ Loker, William A., opcit, pp.2-4.

We will now trace this development in Cochrane, beginning with a short story of the Bents, the real founders of today's Cochrane.

The Early Bents

The Bent family was probably the most influential family to live in Middlesex County. Two of the sons, William and James Madison, are recognized as the founders of the shoe industry in Cochituate, once called Bentville. Therefore a short history of the family is pertinent to give more background to the paper.

John Bent first came to America on the ship "Confidence" in 1638, leaving family and friends behind in England, to secure, as an original Sudbury grantee, six acres of virgin land. His was the seventh lot (according to the maps in Hudson's Annals) from the first meeting house. After remaining only a few months in his new homeland, John Bent returned to England on the ship "Jonothan" for the rest of his family. For some of his family, like his sister Agnes, the voyage to America was too taxing, and they never reached their new homes.

John Bent became a freeman on May 13, 1640, as well as a Proprietor of the Marlboro plantation. One of his sons, John Jr., was the fourth to erect a house on Framingham soil, land once belonging to Henry Rice. A second son, Peter, was influential in the town of Marlboro, where he was an original petitioner.¹

However, the most famous of the Bents were not born until several years later, William and James Madison Bent, whose story is told in the following sections.

¹ Hudson, Alfred Sereno, The Annals, pp. 2, 105.

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The Cochituate Industry from 1830 to the Civil War

In 1825, the Bents came to Cochituate and decided not to settle in Lokerville, at that time the center of the town, where store, school, church and tavern were located. Rather, they decided to settle in the present center of Cochituate, then a widely extending, unoccupied plain.

In 1830, William Bent, the eldest son, established a "central-shop," where the Mobil gas station presently stands, from which he distributed leather obtained in Boston to the farmers and workers in the ten-footers and sent the finished shoes by horse wagon to Boston to be shipped to the Southern firm of Potter, White and Bailey.¹ At this time, only thirty-one men and fifteen women were employed, but nevertheless, it was the first "factory" most of the natives of Cochituate had seen. In 1837, the number of pairs of shoes manufactured was 29,660, valued at \$22,419.²

In 1840, William decided that production could be greatly increased if the majority of the work was done in the factory, and in 1843, he joined forces with his brother, James Madison, whose craftsmanship had at last been approved by his very particular brother. This proved a shrewd move on William's part, because James was most inventive. Such accomplishments as the shoe bench and ironhead block, commonly called the "niggerhead last," are attributed to James Madison's genius.

James also took an active part in the civic life of the village. While James was an agent for the Boston Water Works, he made many improvements in the Cochituate water system. As a public figure, he served as a selectman for many years and as a member of the state legislation.

However, it is unfair to minimize William's inventiveness, for he did invent a splitting machine for sole leather; its basic plan is still in use. And it was William who alone had to carry the responsibility of the factory from 1830 to 1843.³

¹ Interview with Margaret Bent Morrell.

² Hudson, A.S., opcit, pg.104.

³ Anonymous, "James M. Bent (obituary)", Natick Bulletin



James Madison
Bent
at 60.

The firm name of Wm. and J.M. Bent was adopted in 1849,¹ and from then until the Civil War, it continued to prosper. In 1865, the value of shoes produced was \$282,760; 182 men and 29 women were employed.²

Soon, a horse-run treadmill furnished the power, and around 1865 the sewing and pegging machines were introduced. The Bents used William's original "central shop" in order to house these new machines. This joined the larger, more recently constructed building to the store where workers could receive food, clothing and household items rather than weekly wages. (See the bottom sketch on page 10.)

The Civil War had little effect on the Cochituate shoe industry. During it, manufacturing for Potter, White and Bailey became almost exclusive.

¹ Anonymous, Cochituate (Historical Sketch of), pg. 82.

² Hudson, A.S., opcit, pg. 104.

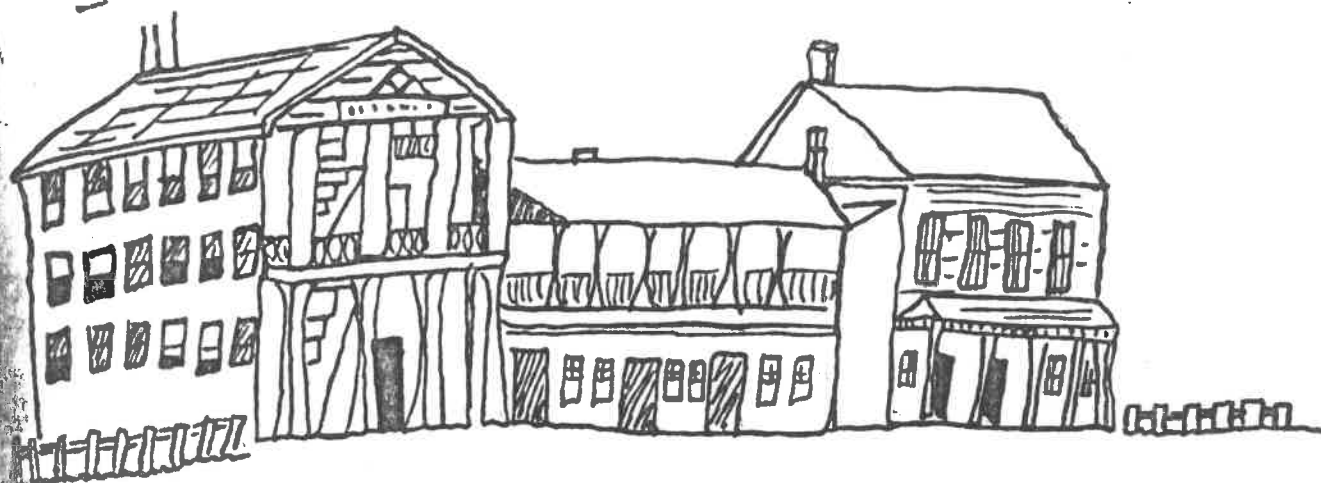
³ Interview with Margaret Bent Morrell.

Although the Bent factory was by far the largest shoe producer in Cochituate at that time, there were, according to a map of 1856, three others: the Hawes and Hammond ten-footers on West Plain Street, and a small shop near the present site of the Hannah Williams playground, the owner of which is not specified.¹

¹ Map of Cochituate in 1856, (cartographer unknown).

The Hey - Day of the Industry

The years from 1865 to 1895 saw a fantastic growth in the Cochituate shoe industry. During this time the Bent factory was renovated twice, once to move the attached store around to facilitate road construction, and a second time to make one building of the middle partition and store.¹ (See middle and top sketches respectively, below.)



It also changed hands in 1885, when William H., J.A., Myron W. and Ralph Bent, sons of James Madison Bent, assumed proprietorship. They were associated with the Bent factory until the Deans took it over in 1895. William H. and James A. served on the board of selectmen, following their father's tradition. William H. and Myron W. served as representatives. Production had increased such that in 1885, from 3,000 to 4,000 complete pairs were manufactured daily by 550 to 600 operatives. Unlike the majority of the factories that were springing up which manufactured solely the brogan, the Bents made fine shoes (with distinction between the left and right shoe) under careful and skillful supervision, in a wide variety of styles.²

¹ Interview with Margaret Bent Morrell.

² Anonymous, Cochituate, (Historical Sketch of), pp. 83-84.

The cases of completed shoes were carried to Boston on a heavy pung, or caravan, drawn by six or eight horses from the Bent stable in back of the present Hannah Williams Playground. The team was driven by Clifton Hibbard, accompanied by his inseparable little white dog.

The route was: to Newton; exchange horses for fresh ones; on to Boston; deliver the shoes; secure a load of dried leather hides for the return journey. Shoes were taken to Boston each day, regardless of the weather.¹

Until the Civil War, Bents was the only existant factory in Cochituate. The years after the Civil War saw the advent of many more factories- the Dean, the William, The Griffen.

The Deans came to Cochituate in 1861, and inaugurated a shoe manufacturing concern, begun in their basement, afterwards continued by T. A. and H. C. Dean, who were succeeded by C. W. and H. C. Dean. At this time, H. C. decided to remain the proprietor of the shop on Main Street² and C. W. became the proprietor and later the sole owner of the Hammond shoeshop on Maple Street.³

A Mr. Griffen came to Cochituate soon after and established a factory near the old Catholic church on Maple Street, but he soon sold his shop to Charles W. Dean because he wished to assume proprietorship of the Lyon Factory (~~near~~ on the present site of the Texaco station). C.W. Dean united his shop and the former Griffen's shop to form one shop on Winter Street.⁴

About this time, in 1870, a man named King formed another shop with A. F. Dean; King and Dean's shop was located on the corner of Maple and Main Streets. In 1873, Mr. A. A. Dean assumed full control and thus continued until 1879, when R. C. Dean became a partner. In 1882, he became the sole proprietor.⁵

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- 1 MacKay, Ruth, Cochituate Fifty Years Ago, pg. 2 .
 - 2 Anonymous Cochituate, (Historical Sketch of), pp. 83-84.
 - 3 Map of Cochituate in 1875.
 - 4 Interview with Alvin Neal.
 - 5 Anonymous, Cochituate (Historical Sketch of), pg.84.

Griffen ^{improved} ameliorated his newly acquired factory by moving the "Beehive," a five or six storey tenement on Winter Street, owned by Charles W. Bascomb formerly, to Bradford Street and adjoined it to the former Lyon factory as a boarding house for the immigrant workers, particularly the Greeks and Bavarians, of all the factories. Many such worker boarding houses were found around the town. The "Beehive" later burned down.¹ All in all Mr. Griffen employed around 400 hands.²

The Bents now bought a large house on Maple Street and converted this to a shoeshop which was promptly nicknamed "Bleak House" by the townspeople.³

There were also many smaller shops: Risley's and Corman's on Corman's Lane; Bryant's, Lovejoy's and O.T. Lyon's (other than the larger factory bought by Griffen) on Commonwealth Road; W. Hammond's (other than the one formerly run by C.W. Dean) and Davis' on West Plain Street and T.A. Dean's between Willard and Maple Streets. (These observations are according to the map of Cochrane in 1875; it is highly probable that there were some later changeovers or additions, but there is no record of them.)⁴ These smaller shops usually finished the shoes partially manufactured in the larger factories (except the Bent Factory which was now completely independent.) Each of these smaller factories, or ten-footers, employed from 20 to 100 workers.⁵

It is said that the last of the ten-footers went when Billy Hammond's small shop near Legion Hall was torn down a few years ago. But the writers feel that there ~~is still at least one~~ ^{is still at least two or one} standing in the center of Cochrane, behind the house to the left of the

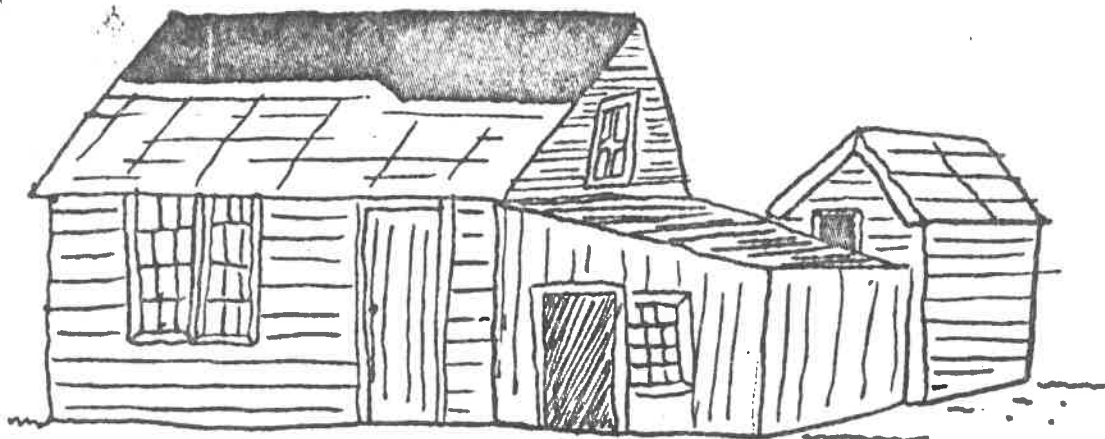
1 Interview with Margaret Bent Morrell.

2 Loker, Wm. A., Bent Shoe Factory and Others, pg. 3.

3 Interview with Margaret Bent Morrell.

4 Map of Cochrane in 1875.

5 Loker, Wm. A., opcit, pg. 4.



Proposed Ten-footer

~~new Catholic Church, and behind the Allen's house on Comm. Rd. East~~
~~A small shop is indicated on this location on~~
~~the Cochituate map of 1908, behind the home of A.P. Dean. But, there~~
~~is indeed room for debate. ¹ Mrs. Allen remembers this building~~
~~being used as a shoe shop when she~~
~~was a girl.~~

When Charles Dean in 1895 bought the Bent factories, a Mr. Williams bought his combined factory from him. Here he invented a device- steel-reinforced toe caps (Mr. Neal still owns a pair of shoes capped with these)- which he patented and which were used throughout this country and Europe.² He employed around 300 hands.³

Near this time, there was the advent of the Chessman factory (the only factory still standing in Cochituate) on Harrison Street.⁴

The shoes manufactured in all the shops except the Bents were generally brogans and plow shoes. These were in steady and extensive demand through the South and West.

The manufacture, like that of the Bents, was brought daily into Boston to be shipped by the wholesale dealers where the demand was greatest.⁵

The labor supply for the prospering shoe industry was supplied chiefly by Cochituate and Natick. In 1890, more than eight street-cars brought the workers to the factory from Natick each morning and back to Natick again in the evening.⁶ In fact, it was this need

¹ Map of Cochituate in 1908.

² Interview with Alvin Neal.

³ Loker, Wm. A., opcit, pg. 3.

⁴ Interview with Alvin Neal and map of Cochituate in 1908.

⁵ Anonymous, Cochituate, (Historical Sketch of), pg. 84.

⁶ Anonymous, ad in Natick Bulletin

for transportation of the Natick workers to the Cochituate factories that was one of the main reasons for creating first the horsecar, then the streetcar system between Cochituate and Natick.¹

Because of the increasing labor population, the workers decided to join together to obtain certain key requests, such as increased pay (in 1885, they were receiving \$14 weekly) and decreased hours (they worked from 7:00 to noon, 1:00 to 6:00, with decreased hours on Saturdays).² The first outcropping of this united labor force was the Knights of Labor Hall, now the Legion Hall, where the workers gathered to play pinochle more often than to discuss their grievances.³

Another interesting development of the industry was the innovation of James Alvin Bent, Margaret Morrell's father. In those days, the shoes were put in big wooden boxes for shipping, and supplying the factories in Cochituate as well as Natick made a big business.

He remodelled his large barn into a factory, and the shooks and boxboards came to Wayland by freight, and a three-horse team made two trips a day to Wayland to bring the box makings to Cochituate. They were then nailed together and delivered to the different factories. He had this business for a number of years and Mrs. Bent carried on after his death.⁴

Also interesting to note is ~~Charlie May's paste manufacture~~, carried on in his home on German Hill. He sold chiefly to Mr. Williams.⁵ "Boss" May, a self-taught chemist, was undoubtedly the champion checker player in this area.

At this time, the population of Cochituate had come to outnumber Wayland's. By 1878, it became necessary to construct a public water supply for this industrial village. Electric lights were installed before 1890. In 1884, horsecars began running on the Natick and Cochituate Street Railway; electric streetcars took their place in 1892.⁶

1 Interview with Alvin Neal.

2 MacKay, R., opcit, pg. 3 and interview with Alvin Neal.

3 Speculation

4 Loker, Wm. A., opcit, pg. 3.

5 Interview with Alvin Neal

6 Anonymous, Wayland: A Community Handbook, pg. 8.

Because of the growing prosperity of Cochrutuate, there was increased time and desire for interesting leisure pastimes. One of Cochrutuate's favority anecdotes sprouts from this desire.

The Bent factory sponsored a champion baseball team which defeated all opponents. Young Elmer Bent, son of W.H. Bent, was the first one to develop a curve drop ball, up to this time unknown to baseball players, and it couldn't be fathomed by the opposing teams.

Mr. Potter, of Potter, White and Bailey, the buyers of the Bent's shoes, was a graduate of Harvard college, and in 1885 Harvard had a undefeated championship team. He was so impressed by the Bent team that he arranged to have an exhibition game with Harvard played in the present ball park in Cochrutuate. He wouldn't have been so anxious to arrange this game could he have foreseen the result.

It was an exciting day in Cochrutuate in 1885 when the champion Harvard team came to play the game with the Shoe Pegs, as the Cochrutuate team was called. The park was crowded and great tension prevailed.

Elmer the Great was at his best, and the final score was Cochrutuate 4, Harvard 1. Elmer was immediately hired by Harvard as a coach to the Harvard pitchers, and he taught them the mysteries of that great curve ball he invented.¹

The Bents, great showmen, also sponsored the brass band of the Preface and, in addition, raised prize cattle to show at the Framingham Agricultural Fair. Their farm was located at the present site of Wayland Acres. They had at last found a worthy superintendent for their cows- Mr. Robert H. Scotland's grandfather!

¹Loker, Wm. A. ,opcit, pp. 1-2.



The Williams Mansion

There was also a great tendency to display their wealth through such opulant gaudiness as their huge Victorian houses and the Dean mausoleum at the Lake View Cemetary, or such philanthropic gestures as the Hannah Williams Playground.¹

This was the Hey-Day.

¹ Interview with Alvin Neal.

The Sole Departeth: The Decline

From 1835 until 1895, William H. ("Harry") Bent, eldest son of James Madison, assumed his father's position, aided by his three younger brothers, at the head of the Bent Shoe Factory. Yet, by the time Harry died in 1895, Myron, who was busy manufacturing another type of shoe, and James Alvin Bent, who was occupied by his box business, were engaged in other ventures, and Ralph Bent did not possess the necessary leadership. Thus there was no one able to take command. To make matters worse, in 1893, Potter, White, and Bailey suffered a \$1,000,000 failure. The Bent Factory soon failed.¹

At this time, Charles W. Dean, sizing up the situation, seized the opportunity to increase the Dean's property holdings and prosperity, and he bought the large Bent factory as well as the Bent's "Bleak House" on Maple Street. However, C.W. Dean got at loggerheads with the town and chose to move his industry to Natick. And, until 1910, the old shoe factory remained standing, empty and unproductive.

As if by chain reaction, one by one the other large factories of Cochrasset began to disappear, because of financial failure, fire, or labor problems, and with them, the ten-footers went. Because he felt the need of a larger factory, Griffen moved his location from Bradford Street near the grammar school to Pepperell. After he was there for a short time, his new factory burned, leaving him financially ruined. When the Williams factory burned, a new one was established in Holliston. This factory, which is still in operation, made Williams, a former Cochrasset resident, a multimillionaire.²

By 1910, all the shoe factories had ceased operations, having moved to other towns or having burned and not been replaced.³

The hey-day was over and Cochrasset was no longer a prominent Massachusetts industrial town. Yet the village did not decrease

1 Interview with Margaret Bent Morrell.

2 Loker, Wm. A., opcit, pg. 4.

3 Anonymous, Wayland: A Community Handbook, pg. 9.

Among these was included some
factories that sprung up
in the latter days of the industry -
Dexter Danti's, Auburn Cann's, Caswell's, & Riker
& Lamont's.

18
20.
in population as would be expected with the exodus of the shoe industry, for the laborers continued to support their families by acquiring jobs at the Natick factories, particularly the Welch factory just over the town line.¹

There are only a few people left in Cochrasset today who remember this important business, and it is hard to believe that Cochrasset was once one of the real centers of the shoe industry in New England.

¹ Interview with Alvin Neal.

Epilogue

In the preceding paper the writers have tried to present a picture of the Cochituate shoe industry, compiling all known facts in what we hope is a logical and meaningful chronicle.

Through the aid of people who are familiar with this subject and our advantage of having all available resource materials graciously lent to us, we have come to appreciate the sentiment and pride each deep-rooted resident of Cochituate feels when he is asked by a curious youngster to retell the story of the great shoe industry.

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Maps-

Cochituate in 1856, 1875, 1908.

Interviews-

Margaret Bent Morrell and Alvin Neal.

...and extensive personal observation and speculation.

question Deane taking over Bent factory in 1895. I think it was idle for some time after the Bents failed (Failed in 1892)

The Lyon factory was not on sight of Texaco Sta but in the area and to the east of where the tennis courts are now located.

see page 12 one of the Bent brothers ^{on the Scotland side}
There was a factory on Bent Ave. I think owned by Dexter Bent about 1895 Robt. Scotland's ^{great} grandfather came a partner with Ben Campbell they manufactured shoes and that is why R.H. teaches in N. H. S. before 1900
It was a complete factory. (Dexter Bent - Campbell didn't know as much about shoes as he thought. At he did. His grandfather lost plenty of money there)

(think the Chas. May paste factory in Noron.)
It was the legitimate Oil people who connected and much of shoe dressing for the Muff use the proprietor was a self taught chemist. Known as "Boss May" and incidentally the chemist was a member of the players in this area. A very bright man & friend of D. He lived in Clarence Williams old house on Pemberton Rd. - Felling a long while in I can remember when the stitching of ^{11 inch} ^{4 inch} ^{1/2 inch} ^{1/4 inch} ^{1/8 inch} ^{1/16 inch} ^{1/32 inch} ^{1/64 inch} ^{1/128 inch} ^{1/256 inch} ^{1/512 inch} ^{1/1024 inch} ^{1/2048 inch} ^{1/4096 inch} ^{1/8192 inch} ^{1/16384 inch} ^{1/32768 inch} ^{1/65536 inch} ^{1/131072 inch} ^{1/262144 inch} ^{1/524288 inch} ^{1/1048576 inch} ^{1/2097152 inch} ^{1/4194304 inch} ^{1/8388608 inch} ^{1/16777216 inch} ^{1/33554432 inch} ^{1/67108864 inch} ^{1/134217728 inch} ^{1/268435456 inch} ^{1/536870912 inch} ^{1/1073741824 inch} ^{1/2147483648 inch} ^{1/4294967296 inch} ^{1/8589934592 inch} ^{1/17179869184 inch} ^{1/34359738368 inch} ^{1/68719476736 inch} ^{1/137438953472 inch} ^{1/274877906944 inch} ^{1/549755813888 inch} ^{1/1099511627776 inch} ^{1/2199023255552 inch} ^{1/4398046511104 inch} ^{1/8796093022208 inch} ^{1/17592186044416 inch} ^{1/35184372088832 inch} ^{1/70368744177664 inch} ^{1/140737488355328 inch} ^{1/281474976710656 inch} ^{1/562949953421312 inch} ^{1/1125899906842624 inch} ^{1/2251799813685248 inch} ^{1/4503599627370496 inch} ^{1/9007199254740992 inch} ^{1/18014398509481984 inch} ^{1/36028797018963968 inch} ^{1/72057594037927936 inch} ^{1/144115188075855872 inch} ^{1/288230376151711744 inch} ^{1/576460752303423488 inch} ^{1/1152921504606846976 inch} ^{1/2305843009213693952 inch} ^{1/4611686018427387904 inch} ^{1/9223372036854775808 inch} ^{1/18446744073709551616 inch} ^{1/36893488147419103232 inch} ^{1/73786976294838206464 inch} ^{1/147573952589676412928 inch} ^{1/295147905179352825856 inch} ^{1/590295810358705651712 inch} ^{1/1180591620717411303424 inch} ^{1/2361183241434822606848 inch} ^{1/4722366482869645213696 inch} ^{1/9444732965739290427392 inch} ^{1/18889465931478580854784 inch} ^{1/37778931862957161709568 inch} ^{1/75557863725914323419136 inch} ^{1/151115727451828646838272 inch} ^{1/302231454903657293676544 inch} ^{1/604462909807314587353088 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Will Hunting was catcher for Elmer Bent on ball team.
& knew Will Hunting. Will worked in factory

Caswell's factory was on Bradford St. the side of
the Chessman factory toward the school.

Recher & Samarne had a good sized factory on
Damon St. beyond Fallow's house where two new houses
have been built

~~Coburn~~
Bea's Dada factory behind Edith Thayer's
house now to left of Catholic Church. This was a
fair sized two story factory. W. J. Scotland used
to watch & start up the machinery & shafting after
they caught on how to get the steam engine going.
Dana E. Lewis was the engineer & had money in the
factory.

W. J. Scotland worked one summer in Arthur Williams'
factory at 50¢ per day. His job was to put heels on shoes